

## The Freshman Guide: Dance Team Edition

By Madison Betsill '26



Snapshot of team after a men's basketball game!

*"Coming into college can be extremely overwhelming, but finding something that influences you in a positive way and allows you to put all of your worries aside is unexplainable."*

The notification popped up across my laptop screen like a lightning bolt in the night. I could feel my heart picking up its beat. Did they accept me onto the team? Was I denied? All of these thoughts scattered throughout my brain as I built up the courage to open it. *Welcome to the 2022-23 Loyola Dance Team.* My jaw touched the ground as I began to cheer with excitement.

### Before

Before attending Loyola University Maryland, I had been a competitive dancer for five years. I consistently went to competitions and competed at a National Finals with my team. It had always perked my interest continuing my passion for dance in

college. After applying to Loyola I began to find interest in their dance team. I engaged in their [website](#) that informed me about their mission as a team and the opportunities they engage in regarding Loyola. I was eager to be a part of the school community while continuing my love for dance.

### What to Expect

Once I found out that I had made the team I was then hit with a packet the size of a giant that informed me on all of the events, practices, and time commitments I would be enrolling myself into once the pen hit the paper. All it took was a signature. When attending college it can be a difficult decision to commit to a club sport, particularly the dance team. As a current freshman, you are already unaware of other events and activities that could be happening on campus, all while adapting to the "college lifestyle." But, do not forget, that signature ensures it all. I set aside a lot of time to fully think about the piece of paper that I would be signing. Many people do not realize the amount of hours that go into being a part of the dance team. Listed were the estimated hours we would be practicing a week, which was roughly 8-10. It was vital that I understood the impact the dance team would play on me both physically and mentally.

Ultimately, I picked up the thick pen, with spewing ink, and glided my signature across the bottom right. It was done. The commitment was then made.

### Making the Commitment

As an incoming freshman there are various factors that I want to remind you of when thinking about joining the team. Many positives came out of being on the team this year. As I write this piece, I can now explain all of the ups and downs I experienced and just how much I enjoyed being pushed. Pushed further than I could ever imagine. Yes, you will endure pain, running a mile, and sore limbs, but if your heart is there, it is all worth it. As one of my fellow freshman members, Olivia Lowrie '26 stated, "We are all striving to do our best. It allows me to have connections and always poses new opportunities." Even though I am in Loyola's Fitness and



All of the freshmen on gameday!

Aquatic Center more than the staff, I have been able to make connections at different events like [Women in Sports Day](#), [Relay for Life](#), [CCSJ's](#) Roadside Clean-up, etc. All of these events bring on new interactions and abilities to stay involved with the Loyola community. Being able to advocate for others was one of the sole reasons I auditioned for the dance team.

## Find Your Why

When talking about commitment, what is your WHY? One of the questions posed on the audition paper. Emphasizing the role of commitment, there needs to be a why for wanting to be a part of the team. My why consists of getting to escape from stress, academics, and any worries that I may have. When I dance, I am able to express myself through movement which is a captivating feeling—bundling up all of these emotions and translating them through dance. This form of expression is not something any sport can give you. That is what makes dance so unique and impactful. Ponder this question with something else that you love to do. If you are unsure, find that WHY, find why you enjoy tennis, or chess, or playing the guitar. Channel that into everything you do and I promise it will be more enjoyable. If only you could see me grinning from ear to ear as I write this for you. Coming into college can be extremely overwhelming but finding something that influences you in a positive way and allows you to put all of your worries aside is unexplainable.

## Time Management

A final factor I want you to consider when auditioning is the idea of time management. We have all been there, seeing the sun rise as you finish up a paper due that day or even racing to beat the 11:59 deadline. Time management must be met when committing to the team. There is very little room to fall behind in classes or turn in late work. With practices every other day and weekends, you must set aside time for school work. Another freshman, Kayla Baker '26, explains how making a "to-do list to cross off things that I have done allows me to commit the rest of my time to the dance team." The idea of creating a list can allow you to stay organized and split up your time before or after dance. Finding time to study or get work done is important as a member of the team. You will find out just how quickly your schedule can become packed and how crucial it is to stay on track.

Jen Duffy '26, enjoys how the dance team "gives me a nice structure within my daily life. I tend to do my assignments once they're assigned so they are done in a timely manner and not procrastinate. Since I have such a busy schedule, it allows me to not slack off with my dance team responsibilities." Finding effective structure. Definitely something I have benefited from the team. Practice starts at 6pm, and I end classes at 1:50pm. What I do with my time in between that break must be related to school. These are the thoughts that process throughout my brain as I scramble to be productive. These time blocks in between

Our first gameday at Women's soccer



*"We are all striving to do our best. It allows me to have connections and always poses new opportunities."*

Olivia Lowrie '26



Our photoshoot day for the dance team 22-23 school year



my day allow me to do work, grab food and then prepare for dance. Without the dance team, I would not have impactful structure in my life and I would be tempted to procrastinate a lot more work. But, no. I only get 4 hours and 10 minutes to use my time wisely before nightfall. The structure that my life consists of has been greatly influenced by the dance team and the practices we have 3-4 times a week. Grateful is a word that I would use to describe my appreciation for the dance team and all of the varying opportunities for structure in my schedule.

*"Dance team gives me a nice structure within my daily life. I tend to do my assignments once they're assigned so they are done in a timely manner and not procrastinate."*  
Jen Duffy '26

## Takeaways

I have provided a lot of information regarding the dance team and all of the wonderful experiences that I have had thus far as a freshman. One thing I want you to take away from this piece is a lot of clubs you take part in involve the community and serving others, which is highly effective when attending this institution—knowing they allow you to form connections with different types of people and organizations that will truly impact your time here at Loyola! As I finish up my freshman year, I have been able to encounter on-going opportunities to get involved in some way, shape, or form. Even on a dance team, where there is not much wiggle room left in the jar to partake in outside clubs, I have been able to experience a lot of the community atmosphere throughout this season.

## Check Us Out

So, once you apply for the dance team, let all of these personal experiences that I have informed you about sink in. Let it digest. Check your email, and look for the same header that I received at the top of my page. Once done, truly understand the commitment that you will be making to the team. Identify your WHY and find a way to juggle your time in between dance practices and games. In the end, I promise you, it is all worth it. I look forward to seeing a potential member at tryouts! Best of luck in the upcoming fall!



Our first team bonding of the year hosted at top golf!



One of our volunteering opportunities at CCSJ helping out cleanup on York Road!